

## Rent or Buy Your Display?

The difference between renting a display and buying one is similar to leasing vs buying a new car. When you lease a car, you only pay for the time you use it and have no ownership. When you buy a car, you plan to keep it a while and invest to service and maintain the car.

The following pros and cons will help you decide whether to rent or purchase your display. First make sure what you need the display to accomplish and then plan your exhibit marketing program for the short and long term. This information will ensure your rent vs. buy decision will be informed and well-planned.

### BUYING A DISPLAY

Portable, custom, popup, panel, tabletop, or double deck exhibits can be bought or rented. Compare the pros and cons below and know what is included before you make any purchases! Buying a new custom display averages \$180 per square foot. Buying a portable or panel systems display averages about \$60-75 per square foot.

#### PRO

- If you use the display more than 4 times per year, you are saving money
- The display can be created to your unique specifications and design needs
- There are a great variety of systems, types, and designs to be had
- You can build or buy an exhibit to fit your product and existing graphics

#### CON

- Hidden costs: storage, maintenance, disposal, handling and prep costs
- There is a very small market for used exhibits and disposal is expensive
- You're stuck with the physical design and color/theme throughout its life
- Changes to the design, physical appearance, or size can be costly
- If you have only one exhibit, you cannot attend simultaneous shows

### RENTING A DISPLAY

There is a difference from renting a display from the General Service Contractor, and renting from an exhibit builder or anyone outside your show. Know everything before you make a commitment! The General Service Contractor offers turnkey exhibit rentals – check into these great deals! Rental display vary in pricing starting at \$10 a square foot and easily passing \$40 a square foot depending on graphics, accessories, shipping, freight handling, labor, etc. Be sure to shop around and know what is included before making a commitment.

#### PRO

- You only pay for what you use (not the total cost, storage, refurbishing, prep)

- You can rent a larger or more dramatic booth than you can afford to buy
- If you exhibit large once a year, rent a nice exhibit for your big show
- Renting is a great way to try out a new design or splash a new product line
- If you rent from the Service Contractor you will not pay any shipping or drayage charges for your display

#### CON

- You can only customize a rental exhibit or system so much
- Rental exhibits rarely look new and there are only so many styles
- Hidden costs can include shipping, freight handling, labor, lights, graphics
- You will probably have to create new graphics to fit the rental exhibit

Hybrid displays are also available. You can ask a custom builder to build a custom display that you then agree to rent from them so many times until it is paid off. Like a lease, it is yours to use over a certain time then you may be released from ownership. You can also make this display available to others to rent from the exhibit house and share in this revenue or use it to cut your rental costs. (Be sure this display is available for the shows you need!). Anything is possible, all you have to do is be creative and ask – they can only say no!

Bob Thomas  
Exhibit and Event Management  
877.299.5836  
[BobThomas@ExhibitManagement.com](mailto:BobThomas@ExhibitManagement.com)  
[www.ExhibitManagement.com](http://www.ExhibitManagement.com)